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ABSTRACT

Three conference papers explore issues related to work and the American family. The first, by Stanley C. Gault, Chairman of th Board of the National Association of Manufacturers, discusses recent changes in business practices that accommodate changes in the structure of the modern American family. The second, by Secretary of Labor, William E. Brock, reviews historical change over the past 25 years in the major issues affecting labor and industrial relations, the current state of the American work force, and trends that may be predominant in the work force of the future. The third, by the Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, Thomas R. Donahue, outlines the American trade union movement's view of the relationships between work, the family, and the community, and suggests some economic and institutional changes needed to meet the standards set by Pope John Paul II when he spoke out for equitably incorporating women into the workplace and for a just wage as the measure of the justice of the whole economic system. (RH)

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[WORK AND FAMILY: SEEKING A NEW BALANCE. PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WORK AND FAMILY (WASHINGTON, DC, MARCH 30-31, 1987).]

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REMARKS BY
STANLEY C. GAULT
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS

BEFORE THE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
WORK AND FAMILY: SEEKING A NEW BALANCE

WASHINGTON, D.C.
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1987

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WHO'S TAKING CARE OF THE CHILDREN. HOW? AND WHERE? THOSE ARE BURNING ISSUES FOR MOST PARENTS TODAY. AND BECAUSE THOSE PARENTS CONSTITUTE A CONSIDERABLE PART OF THE WORKFORCE, THEY'RE BURNING ISSUES FOR BUSINESS AS WELL. GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN FAMILY CONCERNS WERE LEFT AT THE FRONT DOOR OF THE HOUSE--IN THE CAPABLE HANDS OF THE MOTHER AT HOME. TODAY, THERE'S OFTEN NO ONE AT HOME AND FAMILY WORRIES ARE ANOTHER PART OF THE DAILY WORKLOAD.

THERE'S A LOT OF SKEPTICISM ABOUT WHETHER FAMILY CONCERNS HAVE MANAGED TO FIND THEIR WAY INTO THE CORPORATE BOARDROOM. BUT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN EMPLOYEE RESPONSES SHOULD ASSURE MOST PEOPLE THAT CEOs ARE QUITE DEFINITELY AWARE OF CHANGES IN TODAY'S FAMILY STRUCTURES. FOR EXAMPLE, MORE AND MORE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING TOP-LEVEL EXECUTIVES, ARE REFUSING TRANSFERS--THEY'RE SIMPLY NOT GOING WHERE THE COMPANY WANTS THEM TO GO BECAUSE OF THEIR FAMILIES. IN MANY CASES, IT'S BECAUSE THE SPOUSE, EITHER HUSBAND OR WIFE, ALSO HAS A CAREER AND A RELOCATION WOULD SEVERELY DISRUPT THAT CAREER TRACK. A HOST OF OTHER FAMILY CONCERNS, SUCH AS CHILD CARE, HOUSING, SCHOOLS AND STANDARD OF LIVING, ENTERS INTO THIS NEW "CORPORATE REBELLION."

IN THE PAST, CORPORATIONS HAVE ROUTINELY PROVIDED MOVING AND TRANSFER COSTS, AS WELL AS INTERIM LIVING EXPENSES IN TRANSFER SITUATIONS. TODAY, INDUSTRY IS INCREASINGLY PROVIDING OTHER ASSISTANCE TO HELP PEOPLE IN THEIR RELOCATION--ASSISTANCE IN PURCHASING MORTGAGES, LOCATING HOUSING, TRANSFER BONUSES, COUNSELING AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEW COMMUNITY AND ITS SCHOOLS, TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND THE JOB MARKET AND HELP IN FINDING THE SPOUSE NEW EMPLOYMENT. STUDIES HAVE SHOWED THAT FOR DUAL-CAREER COUPLES, JOB COUNSELING IN THE NEW COMMUNITY IS RECEIVING TOP PRIORITY RANKING AS AN EMPLOYEE BENEFIT. AND OBVIOUSLY, IT'S A TOP PRIORITY BENEFIT FOR THE COMPANY AS WELL. THE SENSITIVITY TO PARTICULAR FAMILY CONCERNS HELPS KEEP SKILLED, TRAINED PERSONNEL.

WE'VE HEARD THE STATISTICS ABOUT THE CHANGING WORKFORCE SEVERAL TIMES DURING THIS WORK-FAMILY CONFERENCE, BUT THEY BEAR REPEATING. THE SHAPE OF THE WORKFORCE IS AT THE HEART OF OUR DISCUSSIONS HERE. THERE ARE 51 MILLION WOMEN WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME TODAY--44 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL LABOR FORCE. BY THE YEAR 2000, THAT NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE 50 PERCENT. ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF WORKING-AGE WOMEN WILL HOLD JOBS--WOMEN WHO TRADITIONALLY HAVE BEEN THE PRIMARY CARE-GIVERS FOR CHILDREN AND ELDERLY RELATIVES. WE'RE ALSO LOOKING AT A SHRINKING LABOR FORCE AND GLOBAL COMPETITION THAT SHOWS NO SIGNS OF EVER LETTING UP. THEREFORE, THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL INCENTIVE FOR EMPLOYERS TO FIND WAYS TO KEEP THEIR EXPERIENCED EMPLOYEES.

AS WE MOVE INTO A NEW AGE, IT'S IMPORTANT NOT TO MAKE THE MISTAKE OF OVER-GENERALIZATION. FOR YEARS, WE LIVED WITH A FAIRLY ACCURATE ASSUMPTION THAT MOST FAMILIES WERE SIMILARLY STRUCTURED--THE HUSBAND AS BREADWINNER, THE WIFE AS HOMEMAKER AND PRINCIPAL CHILD-REARER. IN THE 1980s, WE HAVE AN AMAZING DIVERSITY IN FAMILY STRUCTURE. DUAL-CAREER COUPLES CHOOSING TO REMAIN CHILDLESS; SINGLE WORKERS CHOOSING TO HAVE CHILDREN; WIDOWED OR DIVORCED SINGLE PARENTS WHO ARE THE SOLE SUPPORT FOR THEIR FAMILIES; FAMILIES CARING FOR ELDERLY RELATIVES IN THEIR HOMES; AND FAMILIES WITH BOTH PARENTS WORKING. THIS DIVERSITY OF FAMILY TYPES AND HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE CREATES DIFFERING DEMANDS FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY AND FOR BENEFITS. NO ONE SINGLE BENEFIT STRUCTURE IS SUITABLE FOR EVERYONE AND SOLUTIONS ARE GOING TO DEMAND A GREAT DEAL OF FLEXIBILITY AND THE BEST OF OUR INNOVATIVE ABILITIES.

EMPLOYERS ARE CURRENTLY MAKING CHANGES IN TWO AREAS--BENEFIT PACKAGES AND PERSONNEL POLICIES AND WORK CONDITIONS, OR A COMBINATION OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT SERVICES. THERE'S A GROWING INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT IN FLEXIBLE BENEFIT PROGRAMS--A CAFETERIA STYLE SELECTION THAT ALLOWS WORKERS TO CHOOSE THOSE BENEFITS BEST SUITED FOR THEIR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS. FOR EMPLOYERS, IT MAY REPRESENT A MORE EQUITABLE METHOD OF DISTRIBUTING BENEFITS TO ALL EMPLOYEES.

FLEXIBLE BENEFIT PLANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A WORKFORCE THAT DIFFERS BY LIFE STYLE, MARITAL STATUS, FAMILY SIZE, AGE AND EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS. A CORE PACKAGE, FOR EXMAPLE, CAN INCLUDE THE BASIC HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE AS WELL AS A RANGE OF OPTIONAL BENEFITS SUCH AS EXTRA SAVINGS, EXTRA VACATION TIME, DENTAL AND VISION CARE, LEGAL SERVICES AND CHILD CARE. THESE PLANS MAY BE APPEALING BECAUSE OPTIONS CAN BE ADDED TO MEET NEW EMPLOYEE NEEDS AND EMPLOYEES CAN ADD OR DISCONTINUE BENEFITS AS THEIR SITUATIONS CHANGE. EMPLOYERS BENEFIT BECAUSE THEY CAN OFFER PROGRAMS TO EMPLOYEES THAT ENABLE THEM TO COMPETE MORE FAVORABLY WITH OTHER FIRMS IN THEIR AREA.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, EAPs, ARE DESIGNED TO ASSIST WITH A RANGE OF PROBLEMS FROM ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE TO MARITAL CONFLICTS. THESE PROGRAMS HAVE GROWN DRAMATICALLY IN USE OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS. IT'S ESTIMATED THAT SOME 10,000 ARE IN EXISTENCE TODAY. IN 1979, IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT 60 PERCENT OF FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES HAD EAPs. THAT NUMBER TODAY HAS GROWN TO 80 PERCENT. THERE'S ALSO A CHANGE IN EAPs--THEY'RE MUCH MORE COMPREHENSIVE TODAY AND ARE INCREASINGLY ALIGNED TO FAMILY-RELATED ISSUES SUCH AS PARENT COUNSELING, FINANCIAL COUNSELING AND MARRIAGE COUNSELING. IN MANY COMPANIES, CHILD CARE INFORMATION AND REFERRAL PROGRAMS AND ON-SITE PARENTING CLASSES ARE OFFERED THROUGH EAPs.

A GREAT DEAL OF CHANGE HAS OCCURRED IN AN INDIRECT SERVICE CATEGORY--ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES. STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT EMPLOYEES WITH MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR WORK SCHEDULES CAN BETTER EASE THE STRESS BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY LIFE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WORKERS WITH PRE-SCHOOLERS. THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION HAS BEEN USED IN REDESIGNING THE TIME AND TIMING OF WORK. EXAMPLES ARE JOB SHARING WHICH ALLOWS TWO EMPLOYEES TO HOLD ONE POSITION JOINTLY; COMPRESSED WORK WEEKS, WHICH ARE USUALLY FOUR-DAY, 40-HOUR WORK WEEKS; AND FLEXITIME, A WORK SCHEDULE THAT ALLOWS VARIATION IN ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES; AND FLEXIPLACE OR WORKING AT HOME. COMPANIES ARE ALSO CHANGING LEAVE POLICIES TO ALLOW MORE FLEXIBILITY AND PROVIDING SPECIFIC PARENTING LEAVE. A STUDY OF LARGE COMPANIES BY CATALYST, A RESEARCH FIRM IN NEW YORK, SHOWS THAT SOME 50 PERCENT NOW OFFER PARENTAL LEAVE IN ADDITION TO MATERNITY LEAVE.

ANOTHER GROWING AREA OF CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT IS CHILD CARE--FROM ON-SITE OR NEAR-SITE DAY CARE FACILITIES...TO CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES...TO CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES AND VOUCHERS... TO CARE OF SICK CHILDREN. THE CONFERENCE BOARD REPORTS THAT THERE'S BEEN A 50 PERCENT INCREASE IN COMPANY INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD CARE SINCE 1984. THERE'S AMPLE REASON. A RECENT SURVEY OF 400 WORKING COUPLES BY FORTUNE MAGAZINE, NEW YORK'S BANK STREET COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION, SHOWED THAT NEARLY 30 PERCENT OF THE MEN HAD REFUSED A NEW JOB, PROMOTION OR TRANSFER BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE MEANT LESS FAMILY TIME. TWENTY-SIX PERCENT OF THE WOMEN GAVE THE SAME RESPONSE. ALMOST 25 PERCENT OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN SOUGHT A LESS DEMANDING JOB IN ORDER TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH THEIR FAMILIES. PRODUCTIVITY IS ANOTHER CRITICAL FACTOR. THE STUDY INDICATED THAT SOME 41 PERCENT OF PARENTS IN THE SURVEY LOST AT LEAST ONE DAY'S WORK IN THE THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY TO CARE FOR FAMILY MATTERS SUCH AS ATTENDING A SCHOOL PLAY OR TENDING AN ILL CHILD.

EMPLOYEES WERE ALSO ASKED WHAT KIND OF HELP COMPANIES COULD PROVIDE. THE RESPONSES WERE INTERESTING. AT THE TOP OF THE WISH LIST WERE MERIT RAISES AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING--TWO ITEMS THAT DON'T SEEM TO MAKE SENSE INITIALLY. WHEN EXPLORED FURTHER, EMPLOYEES SAID THEY WANTED COMPENSATION TIED TO PERFORMANCE SO THEY COULD SPEND MORE MONEY ON CHILD CARE AND THEY WANTED MANAGEMENT TRAINING TO MAKE SUPERVISORS MORE SENSITIVE TO CHILD CARE NEEDS. NEXT ON THE LIST WERE WORK-FAMILY SEMINARS, SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE, ABILITY TO USE SALARY DEDUCTIONS FOR CHILD CARE, PARTIAL REIMBURSEMENT OF CHILD CARE EXPENSES AND FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS. THE PRIORITIES FOR WORKING PARENTS IN COMPANIES THAT ALREADY OFFERED MANY OR ALL OF THOSE BENEFITS WERE FLEXTIME, RESOURCE AND REFERRAL SERVICES AND CONTROL OVER WORK SCHEDULES.

IN A 1981 SURVEY FOR GENERAL MILLS CONDUCTED BY LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES, THE DIVERSITY OF RESPONSES APPEARS AGAIN. I QUOTE, "FAMILY MEMBERS RESIST EFFORTS TO PRESCRIBE A SINGLE SOLUTION FOR BALANCING FAMILY AND WORK RESPONSIBILITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE 20 PERCENT OF FAMILY MEMBERS SAY THAT CHILD CARE AT THE PLACE OF WORK

WOULD HELP A GREAT DEAL, 18 PERCENT SAY IT WOULD HELP ONLY SOMEWHAT AND 62 PERCENT SAY IT EITHER DOESN'T APPLY OR WOULD HELP HARDLY AT ALL. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHEN ASKED ABOUT PART-TIME WORK WITH FULL-TIME BENEFITS, 42 PERCENT SAY IT WOULD HELP A GREAT DEAL, 20 PERCENT ONLY SOMEWHAT AND 38 SAY EITHER LITTLE OR NO HELP OR DOESN'T APPLY. THIS DIVERSITY OF VIEWPOINT IS NOT SURPRISING WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THAT FAMILY NEEDS VARY WIDELY, DEPENDING UPON SUCH CHANGING VARIABLES AS CHILDREN'S AGES, FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, OTHER DEPENDENTS AND THE LIKE."

IN OUR SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS, WE MUST ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIVERSITY AMONG BUSINESS ENTERPRISES. JUST AS FAMILY STRUCTURES AND NEEDS ARE DIVERSE, SO ARE THE NEEDS AND CAPABILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES. A VARIETY OF FACTORS ENTER INTO THE PROCESS OF DETERMINING WHAT BENEFIT PACKAGES AND POLICIES ARE TO BE OFFERED. THE MOST OBVIOUS IS, OF COURSE, THE COST. IN THE UNITED STATES, ON AVERAGE, 38 CENTS OF THE PAYROLL DOLLAR IS SPENT ON BENEFITS. SINCE WORLD WAR II, PER CAPITA BENEFITS HAVE INCREASED TWICE AS FAST AS PER CAPITA INCOME. THE COST OF BENEFITS HAS BEEN RISING FASTER THAN WAGES OR SALARIES. THESE ARE INCREASES INDUSTRY CAN ILL AFFORD, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE COMPETITIVE PRESSURES WE FACE FROM ENTERPRISES ABROAD. FAILURE TO KEEP EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PROGRAMS CURRENT WITH CHANGING FAMILY PATTERNS OR CHANGING WORK PATTERNS DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE. THE RESULT MAY BE A COSTLY AND DUPLICATIVE BENEFIT STRUCTURE THAT DOESN'T SERVE EMPLOYEE NEEDS NOR HELP COMPANIES RECRUIT AND RETAIN VALUABLE EMPLOYEES.

ANOTHER ASPECT IS LOCATION. INNER-CITY FIRMS, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD PROBABLY FIND ON-SITE CHILD CARE FACILITIES AN OVERWHELMINGLY EXPENSIVE EFFORT BECAUSE OF LACK OF SPACE AND THE COST, WHEREAS A SUBURBAN FIRM MAY HAVE MORE ABILITY TO CONSIDER THIS OPTION.

SIZE IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION. LARGER FIRMS HAVE MORE ECONOMIC AND LOGISTIC ABILITY TO EXPERIMENT WITH A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS ON A FORMAL, COMPANY-WIDE BASIS THAN SMALLER FIRMS. AS COMPANIES GROW AND BECOME MORE PROFITABLE, THEY INSTITUTE BETTER

BENEFIT PROGRAMS. IT IS UNREALISTIC TO THINK THAT SMALLER COMPANIES, STRUGGLING FOR SURVIVAL, ESPECIALLY DURING THEIR INCUBATION YEARS, CAN OFFER THE SAME COMPANY-WIDE BENEFITS AS LARGER COMPANIES.

TYPE OF INDUSTRY MUST ALSO BE CONSIDERED. FOR EXAMPLE, FIRMS WHICH NEED WORKERS TO RELOCATE TO AREAS WHERE CHILD CARE OR HEALTH CARE IS UNAVAILABLE OR INFERIOR TO SERVICES AVAILABLE AT THE PRESENT SITE ARE MORE LIKELY TO OFFER THESE DIRECT SERVICES THEMSELVES IN ORDER TO ATTRACT PEOPLE TO THESE AREAS. INDUSTRIES WHERE HIGHLY SKILLED LABOR IS IN SHORT SUPPLY ARE MOTIVATED TO OFFER MORE EXTENSIVE BENEFIT PROGRAMS TO COMPETE FOR WORKFORCES.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE WORKFORCE, AS WE'VE NOTED BEFORE, IS ALL IMPORTANT TO WHAT A COMPANY OFFERS.

THE ISSUES ARE COMPLEX AND THE NEEDS DIVERSE. WE SHOULD RESIST THE INCLINATION FOR ACROSS-THE-BOARD SOLUTIONS AND INSTEAD RELY ON THE INNOVATION AND IMAGINATION OUR COUNTRY IS KNOWN FOR. I CAN THINK OF NOTHING MORE BENEFICIAL THAN THIS CONFERENCE WHICH WE ARE ATTENDING. SECRETARY BROCK AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ARE TO BE COMMENDED FOR BRINGING NATIONAL ATTENTION TO THE CRITICAL ISSUE OF WORK AND FAMILY AND FOR PROVIDING A FORUM TO EXPLORE METHODS OF CHANGE AND ACCOMMODATION.

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TALKING POINTS

SECRETARY WILLIAM E. BROCK

WORK AND FAMILY: SEEKING A NEW BALANCE

MARCH 30, 1987

I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME YOU TO THIS FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WORK AND FAMILY ISSUES.

I AM ESPECIALLY PLEASED THAT THE AFL-CIO AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS HAVE JOINED IN THIS EFFORT. THEIR PARTICIPATION LENDS SUBSTANCE AND CREDIBILITY TO OUR CONFERENCE AND TO OUR VIEW THAT SOLUTIONS TO THE WORK-FAMILY DILEMMA CONCERN US ALL--GOVERNMENT, MANAGEMENT AND LABOR.

FEW ISSUES HAVE EMERGED MORE PROMINENTLY IN THE WORKPLACE OF THE EIGHTIES THAN THOSE SURROUNDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY LIFE.

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WHEN I WAS FIRST ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 1962, THE WORLD OF WORK WAS DOMINATED BY YOUNG WHITE MALES WHOSE WIVES GENERALLY STAYED HOME TO TEND THE FAMILY. THE MAJOR ISSUES AFFECTING LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS RELATED TO WORK RULES FOR RAILROAD EMPLOYEES, AND THE MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS OF AUTOMATION AND TECHNOLOGY. FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HAD JUST BEEN GRANTED THE RIGHT TO BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. FAMILY-RELATED LABOR FORCE ISSUES WERE ONLY A BLIP ON THE HORIZON. FEW

INDUSTRIES AND UNIONS, OTHER THAN THOSE TRADITIONALLY THOUGHT OF AS FEMALE, SUCH AS GARMENT AND TEXTILE, WERE ACTIVELY CONCERNED WITH WORK-FAMILY PROBLEMS.

IN A SINGLE GENERATION THAT LANDSCAPE HAS BEEN DRAMATICALLY ALTERED--THE LABOR FORCE HAS BECOME LESS MALE, LESS YOUNG, AND MORE HETEROGENEOUS.

THE MAJOR CHANGES INCLUDE:

RECORD NUMBERS OF WOMEN ARE ENTERING THE WORK FORCE WHICH IS AGING RAPIDLY. THE NUMBER OF DUAL-EARNER AND SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES IS GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS. THERE ARE MORE WORKING MOTHERS. AND, DUE TO THE AGING OF AMERICA, FAMILIES ARE INCREASINGLY BEING CONFRONTED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDER CARE.

THESE CHANGES ARE PUTTING TREMENDOUS PRESSURES ON AMERICA'S FAMILIES AND ARE STRAINING OUR SUPPORT SYSTEMS. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO AFFECT US INCREASINGLY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.

WHAT IS ALSO CLEAR IS THAT THESE CHANGES AFFECT OUR PRODUCTIVITY AND HENCE OUR COMPETITIVENESS. WE NOW RECOGNIZE THAT IN THE DECADES AHEAD, THE COMPETITIVE CHALLENGE AMERICA FACES COULD HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR ECONOMY, OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, AND OUR STANDARD OF LIVING.

SUDDENLY, EVERYTHING WHICH AFFECTS OUR COMPETITIVENESS, IN A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE WAY, LIKE PRODUCTIVITY, HAS BECOME THE TOPIC OF HEATED PUBLIC DEBATE.

WE MUST HAVE AN INCREASINGLY PRODUCTIVE WORK FORCE, THERE'S SIMPLY NO QUESTION ABOUT THAT. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER OR NOT WE CAN FIND A WAY TO ACHIEVE THAT PRODUCTIVITY WITHOUT SACRIFICING OUR HUMAN VALUES AND OUR GREATEST NATIONAL STRENGTH--OUR FAMILIES.

OUR OBJECTIVE IN CONVENING THIS CONFERENCE IS TO FACILITATE DEBATE AND DISCUSSION, AND TO BEGIN TO IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS TO THE DILEMMA OF HOW TO ACHIEVE THE BALANCE BETWEEN OUR WORK AND OUR FAMILIES.

I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU THIS MORNING SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE STATE OF OUR WORK FORCE TODAY AND WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN THE NEXT CENTURY, ABOUT THE TRENDS WE SEE AFFECTING OUR ABILITY TO COMPETE, AND ABOUT THE KINDS OF CREATIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE WORK/FAMILY DILEMMA WHICH CHALLENGE ALL OF US.

LET ME FIRST SET THE STAGE FOR THIS DISCUSSION BY DESCRIBING THE EFFECT THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES HAVE HAD ON OUR WORK FORCE. FOR WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN ADAPT TO THESE NEW REALITIES ARE THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT WILL PROSPER. THOSE THAT CANNOT ADJUST TO CHANGE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN THE SKILLED AND COMMITTED EMPLOYEES WHO ARE ESSENTIAL

TO A COMPANY'S SUCCESS. THE FUTURE, IT IS SAID, BELONGS TO THOSE WHO CAN HEAR IT COMING.

WHAT WE EXPECT BY THE YEAR 2000 IS AN AGING OF THE WORK FORCE. THIS WILL SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE FLEXIBILITY JUST WHEN THE GREATEST FLEXIBILITY WILL BE REQUIRED OF OUR WORKERS. THE AGING WORK FORCE WILL ALSO BRING HIGHER PAY LEVELS FOR THE MORE EXPERIENCED WORKERS, AND HIGHER COSTS FOR HEALTH INSURANCE AND PENSIONS.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE'LL SEE A DECLINE IN THE YOUTH POPULATION OVERALL. JUST THINK WHAT THIS MEANS FOR EMPLOYERS WHO RELY HEAVILY ON YOUTH FOR ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS.

THE MINORITY AND LOW-INCOME YOUTH POPULATION, HOWEVER, WILL INCREASE. THIS GROUP HAS THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN LEFT BEHIND IN THIS COUNTRY--LARGELY UNEMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYABLE. THEIR POTENTIAL IS GREAT, BUT IT CAN ONLY BE TAPPED THROUGH CREATIVE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES.

THERE WILL CLEARLY BE MORE WOMEN AND MORE SINGLE PARENTS AND MORE DUAL-CAREER FAMILIES IN THE WORK FORCE.

IN FACT, WOMEN, MINORITIES AND IMMIGRANTS WILL ACCOUNT FOR OVER 80 PERCENT OF THE NET ADDITIONS TO THE LABOR FORCE BETWEEN NOW AND THE YEAR 2000. THESE GROUPS WILL INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR

ALL KINDS OF SUPPORT SERVICES SUCH AS CHILD CARE, ELDER CARE, TRAINING IN LITERACY AND OTHER WORKPLACE SKILLS, RETRAINING, EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES, FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLANS, AND OTHERS.

NEW JOBS IN THE ECONOMY WILL STRONGLY FAVOR THE MOST EDUCATED SECTOR OF THE LABOR FORCE. AMONG THE NEW JOBS TO BE CREATED IN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY IN THE NEXT 13 YEARS, EVERY CATEGORY REQUIRING HIGHER SKILLS WILL BE GROWING FASTER. MANY EXISTING JOBS WILL REQUIRE HIGHER LEVELS OF LITERACY AS WELL AS ANALYTICAL, REASONING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS. AS WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN, JOBS REQUIRING LOW SKILLS ARE THE FIRST TO GO. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO DIMINISH BOTH RELATIVELY AND IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS.

IN ASSESSING THE STATE OF THE WORK FORCE AND THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US, WE SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT RECORD ON WHICH TO BUILD IN TERMS OF A GROWING ECONOMY, JOBS CREATED, AND PROGRAMS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE MORE EFFECTIVE. WE REMAIN THE ENVY OF THE WORLD.

TO CONTINUE THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND TO FIND WAYS TO REACH OUT TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO SHARE IN THE FRUITS OF OUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY, THE LABOR DEPARTMENT HAS LAUNCHED A MAJOR INITIATIVE WE ARE CALLING "WORK FORCE 2000".

AS PART OF THIS EFFORT, WE HAVE PROPOSED MAJOR LEGISLATION WHICH WILL FOCUS ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PARENTS AND ADOLESCENT CHILDREN IN FAMILIES RECEIVING AFDC. WE ARE PROPOSING LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR WORKER ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKE OUR PENSION AND WELFARE BENEFIT SYSTEM MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE MOBILITY AS WELL AS THE RETIREMENT NEEDS OF WORKERS.

IN ADDITION, OUR SPONSORSHIP OF THIS CONFERENCE IS AN EFFORT TO BEGIN THE DIALOGUE NECESSARY TO RESOLVE THE WORK-FAMILY ISSUE. WHILE LABOR AND MANAGEMENT HAVE BEGUN TO DEAL WITH SOME OF THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S WORKPLACE, CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSES HAVE BEEN SCATTERED AND UNCOORDINATED. THEY ARE AS VARIED AS THE INSTITUTIONS OFFERING THEM AND THE INDIVIDUALS USING THEM.

THE MANY FACETS OF WORK-FAMILY CONCERN ARE NOT THEORETICAL OR HYPOTHETICAL FOR ME.

SERVING ON MY OWN STAFF ARE INDIVIDUALS WHO MUST COPE EVERY DAY WITH THE WORK-FAMILY BALANCE IN THEIR OWN LIVES. AND MOST INDIVIDUALS AT THIS CONFERENCE ARE HERE NOT ONLY BECAUSE THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PUBLIC POLICY AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ISSUE, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT TOUCHES THEM EVERY SINGLE DAY IN THEIR OWN LIVES.

IN MY OFFICE IS THE WIFE IN A DUAL-EARNER COUPLE. SHE AND HER HUSBAND ARE ALSO THE PARENTS OF A LITTLE GIRL. THEIR NEEDS

ARE FOR MORE FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES, DEPENDABLE, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE AND GOOD HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE. THEIR SITUATION HAS BEEN GREATLY EASED BECAUSE THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IN WASHINGTON HAS ONE OF THE FEW FEDERAL ON-SITE DAY-CARE CENTERS. AND YET EVEN WHEN ALL THE PIECES ARE BROUGHT INTO PLACE, THERE IS STILL THE VERY REAL STRAIN ON THE MARRIAGE ITSELF.

ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN IN MY OFFICE IS A SINGLE PARENT WITH TWO BOYS EIGHT AND TEN. HER NEEDS ARE SIMILAR--YET SPECIAL. THE BURDENS FALL SQUARELY AND SOLELY ON HER SHOULDERS, DAY IN AND DAY OUT. FOR HER THE QUESTION OF AFTER SCHOOL CARE FOR HER LATCHKEY CHILDREN IS A SOURCE OF TERRIBLE ANXIETY.

IN AN OFFICE DOWN THE HALL IS A YOUNG MAN WHO, FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS HAS SINGLE-HANDEDLY RAISED HIS TWO DAUGHTERS. THAT'S A TASK THAT HAS BEEN TRULY REWARDING BUT UNIQUELY DIFFICULT FOR HIM. BECAUSE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S FLEXITIME POLICY HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO BE BOTH FATHER AND MOTHER TO HIS GIRLS AT A TIME IN THEIR LIVES WHEN THEY NEED HIM THE MOST.

IN ONE OF OUR DEPARTMENT'S REGIONAL OFFICES, AN OFFICE DIRECTOR HAS FOR YEARS BEEN SOLE SUPPORT FOR HIS AGING PARENTS. THEIR INCREASING INFIRMITY WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE AND CONTINUING FINANCIAL SACRIFICE NOT TO MENTION THE STRAIN WHICH THIS MUST PUT ON HIS MARRIAGE AND HIS JOB.

THESE ARE ALL EXCELLENT, COMMITTED, SKILLED WORKERS. WE ARE FORTUNATE THAT THE DEPARTMENT CAN ATTRACT AND RETAIN THEM BECAUSE WE OFFER SUCH OPTIONS AS ON-SITE DAY CARE, FLEXITIME, AND THE RECOGNITION IN OUR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH LOCAL 12 OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK-FAMILY ISSUES.

CERTAINLY, THE WORK-FAMILY DILEMMA HAS SERIOUS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS ANOTHER HUMAN SIDE WHICH ALSO REQUIRES SENSITIVE, CREATIVE ATTENTION.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT EMPLOYEES SHOULD NOT HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN BEING GOOD PARENTS OR FAMILY MEMBERS AND BEING GOOD WORKERS. THE TWO ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE, AND OUR WORK-PLACES MUST REFLECT SENSITIVITY AND FLEXIBILITY TO MEET THESE NEEDS.

EMPLOYERS WHO WISH TO ATTRACT AND KEEP THE BEST EMPLOYEES ARE TAKING ACTION NOW TO PROVIDE SUCH BENEFITS AS A STANDARD CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IS ALSO FOCUSING MORE IMAGINATIVELY ON THE PROBLEMS OF WORK AND FAMILY AND HOW TO RESOLVE THEM.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS IS STILL IN QUESTION AS WELL. WE DON'T HAVE TO LOOK ANY FURTHER THAN CAPITOL HILL TO SEE THAT LEGISLATION TO MANDATE PARENTAL LEAVE HAS GENERATED STRONG AND PASSIONATE ARGUMENTS BOTH PRO AND CON.

AT THE STATE LEVEL, ABOUT TWENTY STATES NOW PROVIDE SOME FORM OF PRESCHOOL FUNDING, AND STATES LIKE CONNECTICUT, NEW YORK, CALIFORNIA AND TEXAS ARE ACTIVELY STUDYING THE CONCEPT OF PROVIDING PUBLIC PRESCHOOL FOR ALL CHILDREN AGED THREE OR FOUR. THE RECENT SUPREME COURT RULING THAT STATES MAY ORDER PRIVATE FIRMS TO GRANT SHORT, UNPAID DISABILITY LEAVE TO NEW MOTHERS HAS REKINDLED DEBATE IN CONGRESS AND IN MANY STATE LEGISLATURES.

IT IS MY HOPE THAT THIS CONFERENCE WILL ADVANCE THE PROCESS OF FINDING MORE ANSWERS TO THESE COMPELLING AND COMPLEX PROBLEMS. WHETHER THE SOLUTIONS ENTIRELY COME FROM PRIVATE PARTIES, OR ENTIRELY GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES, OR SOME COMBINATION OF THE TWO, WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT THE PRESSURE FOR SOLUTIONS MUST BE RESPONDED TO AFFIRMATIVELY.

I AM FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE WILL FIND WORKABLE WAYS TO RECONCILE THESE CONFLICTING DEMANDS ON HUMAN BEINGS IN A POSITIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE WAY.

THE SOLUTIONS MUST COME BECAUSE:

- AS THE WORK FORCE CONTINUES TO AGE, TO BECOME MORE HETEROGENEOUS, TO ATTRACT MORE WOMEN, AND TO FACE A SHRINKING POOL OF YOUNG WORKERS, PERSONNEL POLICIES WILL CHANGE OR THE ENTERPRISE WILL WITHER.

- WITH OUR POPULATION AGING, AND MANY OF OUR OLDER AMERICANS RETIRED IN GOOD HEALTH, WE MUST ASK HOW WE CAN TAP THE TREMENDOUS RESOURCE THEY MIGHT OFFER.

- WITH JOBS NOW AND INTO THE 21ST CENTURY REQUIRING MORE SKILLS, WE MUST ASK WHETHER WE CAN ALLOW THE CONDITION OF WELFARE DEPENDENCY TO DEPRIVE NEARLY 25% OF THE POPULATION OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO HOLD THOSE JOBS.

- WITH THE DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE GROWING, WE MUST ASK HOW WE CAN INCREASE THE NUMBERS OF TRAINED AND QUALIFIED CARE GIVERS AND HOW WE CAN PROMOTE A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO DEVELOP VIABLE CHILD CARE OPTIONS.

WE CAN ALREADY SEE THAT WHERE THESE CONCERNS HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED THERE HAVE BEEN SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS, TO THE INDIVIDUALS, TO THE ENTERPRISE AND TO SOCIETY.

HIRING OLDER WORKERS GIVES MANY INDIVIDUALS A SENSE OF INVOLVEMENT AND SELF-WORTH AND HELPS AN EMPLOYER SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE SHRINKING POOL OF YOUNG, ENTRY LEVEL WORKERS.

INVESTMENTS IN CHILD CARE HAVE BOTH A SHORT-TERM AND A LONG-TERM PAYOFF FOR PRODUCTIVITY. IN THE SHORT-RUN, SAFE, ADEQUATE, AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE CHILD CARE HELPS RESOLVE THE

MOST SERIOUS DILEMMA FACED BY WORKING PARENTS. IT HELPS MAKE THEM BETTER, LESS, WORRIED, LESS HARRIED, MORE PRODUCTIVE WORKERS.

IN THE LONG RUN, GOOD CHILD CARE, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS EDUCATIONAL RATHER THAN SIMPLY CUSTODIAL, WILL MAKE ENORMOUS STRIDES IN HELPING TO PREPARE THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF TODAY TO BECOME CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF THE LABOR FORCE OF TOMORROW.

AND, IN THE LONG RUN, THESE SECURE AND WELL-ADJUSTED WORKERS WILL MAKE MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PRODUCTIVITY, QUALITY AND VIABILITY OF AMERICAN INDUSTRY.

WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IN APRIL 1985, I SAID TO MY STAFF THAT WHATEVER ELSE WE ACCOMPLISHED IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT WE MAKE THE DEPARTMENT'S ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE. I BELIEVE WORK FORCE 2000 DOES JUST THAT.

BUT I ALSO WANT TO MAKE CERTAIN DURING MY SERVICE AS SECRETARY THAT I'M NOT LIKE THE GENERAL WHO'S ALWAYS FIGHTING THE LAST WAR.

WHILE THIS CONFERENCE IS AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP IN RESOLVING OUR WORK-FAMILY DILEMMA, IT IS ONLY A FIRST STEP. AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE WE CAN ALREADY SEE THAT THE DEMOGRAPHICS

WILL CONTINUE TO CHANGE AND THE PACE OF WORLD COMPETITION WILL ACCELERATE AND INTENSIFY.

THE WORK FORCE 2000 INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES LIKE THIS CONFERENCE GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET AHEAD OF THE CURVE, TO EMBRACE THE INEVITABLE CHANGE. BUT WE WILL FAIL OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN IF WE STOP HERE, IF THIS CONFERENCE IS ONLY A SUMMATION OF THE STATUS QUO.

JUST AS THE CHINESE SAY A JOURNEY OF ONE THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP, OUR JOURNEY TOWARD A SUCCESSFUL, PRODUCTIVE, COMPETITIVE FUTURE CAN BEGIN TODAY.

THERE IS A COMPELLING DYNAMIC HERE AS THIS CONFERENCE BRINGS TOGETHER EXPERTS; PRACTITIONERS; ACADEMICS; LABOR, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES; COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS, AND INDIVIDUALS--EACH OF US AT ONCE AFFECTED BY THE WORK-FAMILY DILEMMA AND AT THE SAME TIME CAPABLE OF BECOMING PART OF THE SOLUTION.

I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING THIS JOURNEY WITH YOU.

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**Remarks of AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Thomas R. Donahue
to the National Conference on Work and Family Life
Washington, D.C.
March 30, 1987**

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I want to thank all of you for attending this conference and tell you how pleased we are to be able to cooperate with the Department of Labor and the National Association of Manufacturers in supporting it.

We are great believers in this kind of tripartism. There's a wide range of national problems on which the resources of labor, management and government can be and should be brought to bear in a cooperative way, and I think the problems of families head the list.

By long tradition, everybody who wants to be elected or re-elected to public office is a staunch friend of the family. And if you find some of the memorable political ads persuasive, family life in America must be in great shape.

When it's morning in America, so they tell us, Daddy drives to work, Mommy does the dishes and the kids go out and play with the dog, without a care in the world, until evening comes and everybody gets together in the family room to watch family TV shows.

Anybody likely to show up at a conference like this one knows that for most families that isn't the way things are working out.

In America today, one family out of every five with children under 18 is headed by a woman, with no husband or father present. Among black Americans, it's one family out of two.

Scarcely one family in 20 fits the old pattern of one breadwinner, one homemaker, two children and possibly a dog. But a one-parent family is a family nonetheless, and it should be helped and encouraged to provide all the benefits of family living it can.

In America today, seven out of every ten mothers of school-age children work outside the home, and in it, as well.

One out of every four Americans is a child, and one child in five lives in poverty.

This is a land of high and chronic unemployment, in which, at this time of relative prosperity, 12 million Americans are wholly or partially unemployed.

Year after year in this land, good, useful, well-paying jobs, which generations of skilled workers have used to build self-reliant families, are being wiped out by attrition or by sudden-death plant closings.

In this generation, on our watch, millions of young Americans are growing up without the hope of ever in their lives being able to earn their keep, let alone take responsibility for establishing and maintaining families of their own.

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That's what's wrong with the American family. We can't cure the ills of family life until we cure the ills of work life.

In focusing on work as the basic condition of family life, I think this conference is on the right track. And I think it is fair to point out that in making and insisting on that linkage the American labor movement is upwards of a hundred years ahead of the field.

From the beginning, throughout the long struggle to raise wages and living standards, to democratize education, leisure and health care, to broaden individual opportunity and secure dignity in old age, the labor movement has worked to strengthen and enrich family life in America.

Generations of American families have benefited through higher wages, negotiated pensions and health and welfare programs, improved job security and increased leisure for enjoying family life.

The entire society has gained through union-won wage, hours and overtime laws; child-labor laws and health and safety laws, and through union campaigns for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid; equal employment opportunity and pay equity; day care and a wide range of other programs that support, protect and promote the quality of family life.

The basic operating principle of the American trade union movement in all of its work at the bargaining table, in the legislatures and in the community has been that the family is the foundation of the community, and that work is the foundation of the family.

And I am happy to say that we are by no means alone in that view.

I am aware that some of those who regard Adam Smith as a greater lawgiver than Moses have tried to paint the American Bishops' pastoral letter on the American economy as an aberration.

So let me cite Pope John Paul II, who has never been accused of excessive liberalism. Summing up a couple of thousand years of conservative Catholic doctrine, in his encyclical, Laborem Exercens, Pope John Paul puts the case for these basic human values of work and family this way:

"Work is a good thing for man--a good thing for his humanity--because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes 'more a human being'."

I think that the development of human persons is clearly the most crucial function of worklife and family life. There are no self-made men or women. Developing our human potential is something we do face to face, side by side, working and living with each other.

Work and the rewards of work--the business of earning your keep and supporting a family by making or doing something useful to others--are the source of the self-reliance and self-respect that engender respect for others and provide the basis of stable, civilized community life.

Pope John Paul underlines that fact by saying that "Work constitutes a foundation for the formation of family life, which is a natural right and something that man is called to. Work is a condition for making it possible to found a family, since the family requires the means of subsistence which man normally gains through work."

If work and family are inseparable, if they are both essential to make individual lives meaningful and constructive within a civilized and purposeful society, as our instincts, our experience and our religious teachers insist, then let's stop fooling around.

Instead of deploring the fact that both mothers and fathers work, let's help working parents to be better parents.

Instead of trying to reverse a trend that has been accelerating for 30 years, let's do what has to be done to promote and enrich family life as it is.

Instead of writing off those who have no place in the community, let's recognize the duty to see that they have a chance to make a place for themselves and their children.

It boils down to the question of whether a civilized society has an obligation to see that all of its citizens actually have a place, and of how barren or precarious that place should be.

We don't raise the level of our society by urging jobless young men to provide decent, stable homes for the children they beget while, in the same breath, pressing for reduction of the minimum wage for that same age group.

Indeed, one of the most urgent tasks before Congress is to restore the minimum wage to the level of buying power that Congress established ten years ago, and see that it never again sinks below the level needed to keep body and soul together.

We're not going to improve the rate of family formation and reduce the rate of family breakups as long as we tolerate an unemployment rate that hangs above 7 percent year after year.

We're not going to strengthen the family by trying to send working mothers back into the home by killing off what few child-care programs exist, in a time when the real earnings of young wage earners are dropping steadily, year after year, while the costs of establishing and maintaining a home and rearing and educating children are climbing to levels never before dreamed of.

And it's certainly no good reopening the home sweatshop. Unfair employers have always stood ready to invade the home and exploit the family. After a half-century of government efforts to eradicate the home workshop rackets, it's an outrage to see this Administration forcing the door open once again for swindlers who want to evade worker benefits, payroll taxes and the minimum-wage, child-labor and safety-and-health laws.

God knows, the business world has adjusted to the two-earner family. Where do you find a house these days that can be paid for on the salary of one office worker or teacher or mechanic?

The adjustment that business still needs to make is to give up the notion that the second earner may be paid less for doing the same work as the first.

Of women in the workforce, Pope John Paul says:

". . . They should be able to fulfill their tasks in accordance with their own nature, without being discriminated against and without being excluded from jobs for which they are capable, but also without lack of respect for their family aspirations and for their specific role in contributing, together with men, to the good of society. The true advancement of women requires that labor should be structured in such a way that women do not have to pay for their advancement by abandoning what is specific to them and at the expense of the family, in which women as mothers have an irreplaceable role."

There is nothing in that standard that does not apply equally to men, as well as to women, and I wish the Pope had said it that way.

But meeting that standard requires pay equity. It requires us to negotiate flexible hours and reasonable maternity and paternity leaves.

It requires the establishment of day-care facilities in the workplace or near at hand in the community.

It requires government to eliminate sweatshops, including the home sweatshop, and to enforce the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Governments and employers and unions all have a role to play in these and other constructive efforts to make family life more livable, more affordable and more rewarding.

In all this world, there is only one industrialized nation--Sweden--that has a higher proportion of working mothers than the United States. And yet, the United States stands alone as the only industrialized nation on earth that has no national child-care policy worth mentioning.

The most recent figures that I've seen indicate that nearly 25 million children need day care or after-school care, but there are slots in federally-supported programs for only about one out of 50 of them.

Working parents pay an average of $3,000 a year--per child--for day care, and that's a full third of the average annual earnings of single mothers.

But government leaders need to do more than remove unfair burdens from working parents.

They should adopt as national policy the view they often espouse in speeches, that our families and our children are worth encouraging. This country should invest more--much more, rather than less and less and less--in nutrition, education, housing and health care. And if every politician who pays lip service to our children as "our most precious national resource" really meant it, that's what would happen.

Above all, to ensure a healthy family life, America must have more and better jobs. That means an end to the systematic destruction of America's industrial base. It means an end to one-way trade policies that flood the nation with cheap imports at the cost of mass unemployment.

It means training programs for jobs that pay a living wage that permit families to keep a roof overhead and put food on the table and a little money in the bank for a brighter family future.

It means a minimum wage sufficient to keep body and soul together and a level of unemployment compensation sufficient to prevent the dispossession and impoverishment of families when hard times come around.

As matters stand, the minimum wage provides $4,000 a year less than the official poverty level for a family of four.

In America today, with unemployment afflicting 20 million families a year, and with 8 million people out of work at any given time, year after year, only one jobless worker in three receives any jobless benefits at all. And he or she receives no more, on average, than 35 percent of previous earnings.

As a response to the needs of families in trouble through no fault of their own, that is a disgrace that puts America right at the bottom among the free industrial nations, but it isn't the worst blot on our record.

That, I think, is the mindless punishment inflicted on troubled families by the 24 states that refuse aid to families with dependent children except on the condition that Daddy get out of the house and out of the lives of his wife and children.

What kind of people believe that it's the duty of the community not to help its members over obstacles, but to seize the opportunity to pile more obstacles before them?

It seems to me that the plight of the family cries out for a general rethinking of all of this country's social policies from the bottom up--and the bottom of the economic ladder is the place to start.

Let me quote Pope John Paul one last time, on the meaning of the Biblical injunction that "the laborer is worthy of his hire:"

"A just wage is the concrete means of verifying the justice of the whole socioeconomic system . . . and of checking that it is functioning justly.

"Just remuneration for the work of an adult who is responsible for a family means remuneration which will suffice for establishing and properly maintaining a family and for providing for its future."

I say there is no better way--and ultimately no other way--to provide for our country's future than that.

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